UNRESTRAINED SUMMER FUN

CASCADIA URBAN-RURAL COALITION

VOLUME ii * SUMMER 2022

cover illustration:
You Watch It Fall Apart,
oil marker and watercolor on paper, 7in x 10in.
E.L. Stelter

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FOREWORD

Welcome to Volume II of our zine series, *UNRESTRAINED SUMMER FUN: visioning a liberated summer in Cascadia*. Many thanks to our contributors for gifting us their offerings!

This summer we've been experimenting and expanding. Extending our hyphae in novel ways, and stagnating in others.

We completed our first blueberry distribution with mixed results; the blueberry distro is the next step in our relationship with Pearson's farm. We essentially are trading them our labor for a) a spot for our community to hang out, party, and pick blueberries just outside the city where there's good soil and many birds singing and b) picking the blueberry bushes a couple times per season to do a free blueberry distribution in the city. This is inspired by the Black Panthers breakfast program and a way to get new folks interested in what we're doing and to give the urban people non-commodified, well-grown food. We handed out blueberries for a half hour outside the Beacon Hill Link station. We also partied in July at this farm! There was a cookout and music and blueberry picking and the People. It was groovy.

We also kept it local. Our mending circles, a step on the urban commons side of what we do, were a resounding success. The two we hosted were around 15 people each. We patched holes, resewed buttons, and shot the shit in Cal Anderson. Urban commons are a huge part of the ecological future. We meet our needs here in community, and decrease our consumption and reliance on the Amerikan capitalist extraction machine, stitch by stitch. If you have any ideas for skillshares or commons, step the fuck up and let us know!!

We hosted some work parties at Clean Greens and Small Axe. There was also a work party at the Familias Por la Justicia Cooperative farm up in Lynden (indigenous farmworkers owning the means of their production and subsistence which, u know, I mean...hell yes). Those are our bread and butter and how we keep extending our reach into the land, meeting our rural siblings, helping continue to build our local food system, and starting our own things out there. Big love, big thanks to family who worked with us, organized with us...y'all are making this happen. Come thru and get your hands dirty!

RiSiNG

Oh, hello again Sol. It's been a long, cold year, and we've barely seen your glowing smile. But here you are, arrived to your party, and a party it will be. From the wee hours of dusk to the furthest definition of evening, your glow graces us and commands us to dance. But Sol, I'm not sure if you can see it from up there, but that coldness has not just been the result of your absence. The bonds between us little beings have been deteriorating rapidly, costs of living are rising faster than the seas, and our violent society is quickly peeling away any veneer of democratic legitimacy and sliding rapidly from absurd spectacle into full blown fascism. Institutions are crumbling, the climate continues to destabilize, and our days to days feel more like shams than ever before. There's a term we throw around down here: Hypernormalization. It describes the general vibe of living in a failing, collapsing social order where we still must pretend that business as usual matters. Yet sure as the sun rises, well…Sol, you have risen.

So how can we savor your gift, this joyous respite, these three months of exuberant life? How can we have some unrestrained summer fun? I have some ideas, and I hope it makes you happy, Sol, to know we aren't wasting these moments :)

1. **Make Public Art:** There are so many drab and boring walls around. What good is a "clean" wall, devoid of expression? Are canvases meant to stay blank? NO! So get out there with your pens and paint and CREATE! Give those bustling summer crowds something to look at.

2. **Commonize the Streets:** Cars-centric roads? LAME. Impromptu street fairs, concerts, pop-up markets, and pedestrian occupations? That's cool kid shit

3. **Read Poetry to the Passerbys:** Poetry is the medium between life and language, where existence meets communication. It is beauty and sorrow, often cringe and

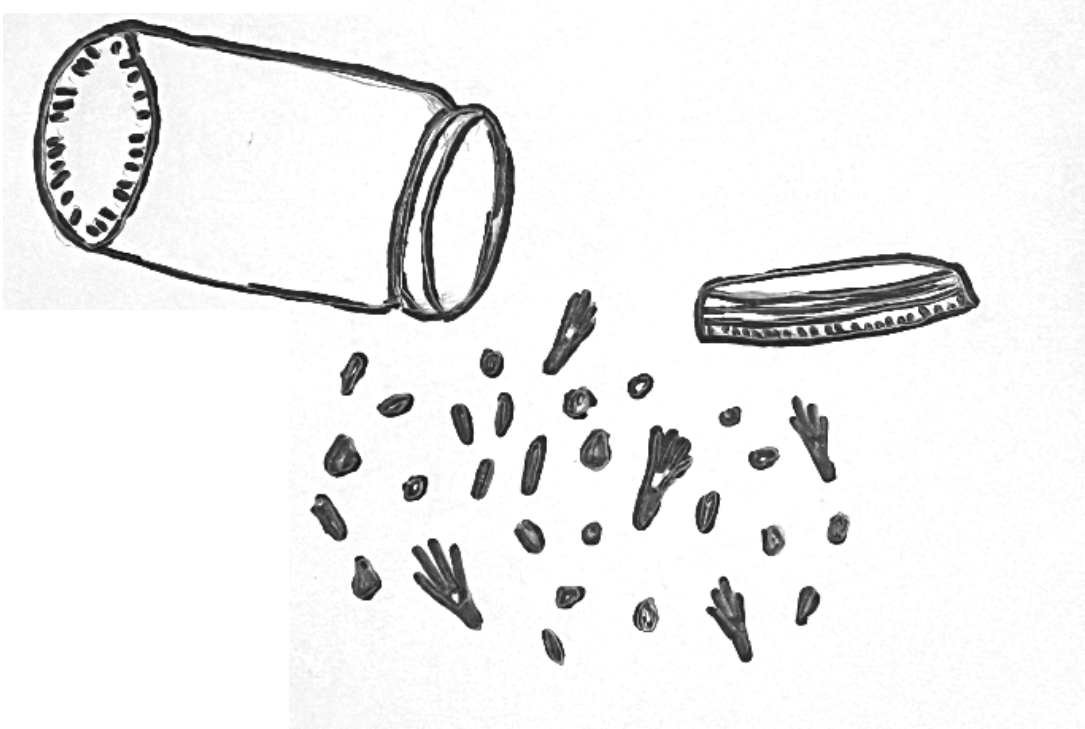
embarrassing, and sometimes heart-melting or eye opening. Every cool city has strangers standing on the sidewalk barring their soul, so why not you? Take advantage of the rainless months!

4. **Spread Native Seeds:** Gather a jar of native and beneficial pollinator seeds (Yarrow, Common Harebell, Pearly Everlasting, Blanketflower, Douglas Aster, Bigleaf Lupine, California Poppy, Calendula, Borage, Showy Fleabane, Milkweed) and start seeding vacant lots, street trees, medians, and most importantly, homeowners' lawns. Eat the rich, feed the pollinators.

5. **Burn Cop Cars and Banks:** Who doesn't love a summer bonfire! If the cops are going to extinguish our flames, use their shit as kindling! ACAB=All Cop-cars Are Burnable

I hope these ideas bring you joy, Sol, and inspire my friends to make the best use of your warmth and light :)

E. S. R.



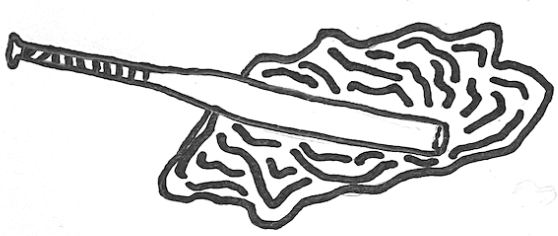
ON THE DAY WE KILLED GOD

On the day we killed god there was no dancing,
Though in the streets and sunlight we ran wild
It was with the freedom of mystery, and no rhythm could tame us.
We took the time to see everything without the heady
Rosy shadows of belief to cloud or color it.
Problems came like they always do and we faltered,
For a while, but we held each other tight in the uncaring darkness.
Mercy has no place in hearts without cruelty.

We took bats and skateboards and stones and beat him down.
Every blow a blessing, the hot blood flowing out like love.
His mangled features were so beautiful crushed into the asphalt,
Wide eyes staring like he was still in there
Looking back at me, seeing for the first time my face,
Believing in my existence as much as I had in his.

Then another squelching THWACK! as someone's bat came down,
The clear eyes popping open, the illusion shattered,
And our delicious primal death-lust returned.
What a glorious dying! we all said,
And we shook off our souls and our sins.
And nothing could have stopped us from pouring
Ourselves through the whole city like an erasing tide.

E.L. Stelter



i WANT LOW-SPEED RAiL

There's a consensus in Cascadia and beyond that vast overhauls to our transportation network are long past due. Amerikan society's reliance on the automobile has resulted in atrocious land use--societally and ecologically--, daily commute traffic, and an immense contribution to GHG emissions. We know that this reliance needs to be broken. Unfortunately unless we want society to grind to a halt completely and millions to perish, we can't just stop using roads with no replacement (and I think there's a place for roads and automobiles even in a considerably healthier society). What replacement(s) we want depends on transportation use in the region in question: here the Puget Sound and surrounding regions. This depends in turn on land use and settlement patterns and economy of the region, as well as culture and values. And then of course the transportation network established affects these things going forward. Finally, we should consider what exists today and also the desired result: a society in Cascadia whose culture and economy, while complex and connected healthily to the global market, is full spectrum (in terms of the many kinds of lifestyles it supports, not just sedentary "middle class" ideal) and self supporting and deeply connected to our ecological brethren who inhabit this place as well. The train is a great option for a stepping stone mode: one that is inherently more efficient than automobiles, promotes dense development, and can serve large swaths of people. But there's a couple different options for train networks to build. Today I'm comparing high-speed rail for a megaregional network to the humble conventional rail regional network.

In accordance with our ideological desire for networks of transportation that support healthier settlement patterns, local economy over relentless globalization, and connection to the land we live on, I'm somewhat less stoked on high-speed rail than a lot of urbanists and transportation nerds. That in addition to the fact that you should have smaller-scale public transportation networks in place before just building intercity links. The folks at Cascadia Rail have tons of great arguments for HSR, mostly related to providing a fast service to replace automobile traffic for the served stations therefore reducing GHG emissions. The Cascadia Rail proposal is a pretty good backbone with HSR running up and down Western Washington and lower speed rail heading east through Stampede Pass. It is, due to its mechanics, limited in scope: it must run relatively straight and needs distance to build up to high speeds. It also, due to expense, must serve large markets. So it can act as a megaregion-level backbone. But if we're really looking to achieve not only the

goals CURC is interested in but getting as many cars as possible off the road etc, we can't just be building a backbone, we need widespread regional networks on a smaller scale. Enter regional trains.

(As a quick aside, the people behind Cascadia Rail have a awful deep focus on "jobs added to economy" and tourist traffic and "economic impact" and "global competitiveness, and this project is a favorite of the governers of so-called OR, WA, and BC...smells like neolibs)

Low-speed, widespread, regional rail networks are workhorses of public transportations in many countries. There are even examples here in the US: the New York metropolitan area has tons of commuter rail lacing throughout its footprint, including NJ Transit, MetroNorth, and LIRR. Other countries have networks that go deeper and serve many more kinds of people. India is chock full of train stations that serve small agricultural cities or are within walking distance of villages. Farmers, artists, salespeople, crafters, and more who want to travel throughout our region are limited to car and bus. It's in our interest to help someone grow food in Enumclaw and travel to market in Issaquah, for example. This versus HSR's focus on city centers, which while important, favors post-industrial workers and tourists. Why? Because not only are we serving many more types of lifestyles, supporting many more kinds of economy and culture, but we're taking way more cars off the road on a distance scale on which trains are still vastly superior. Consider which and how many people commute in and around Seattle vs how many travel between Seattle and Portland every day. For both quantitative and qualitative economic and climate reasons, we need to serve not only the capitalist class but the vast network of what can and should be towns, suburbs, farms, working lands, wild areas, and cities around Seattle, around Vancouver, around Portland. And for that we must prioritize regional rail.

As important as our direct GHG commitments are as well as serving a wide spread of economic activity, we here at CURC are interested in deeper philosophical commitments to "slow" travel, to freedom of movement, and connection to land. In this sense a simple footpath or bikepath network is ideal. But to maintain any semblance of the current standard of living and economy (I know, but just tryna be realistic) we need to replace highways with something approximating their resource-transfer rate. I think regional rail strikes a beautiful balance between that rate and cheap, slow, and accessible transportation. We're anarchists. We want people of ALL kinds traveling throughout our region, whether an industrial worker in Longview or a vagabond pitching a tent on the Stillaguamish River.

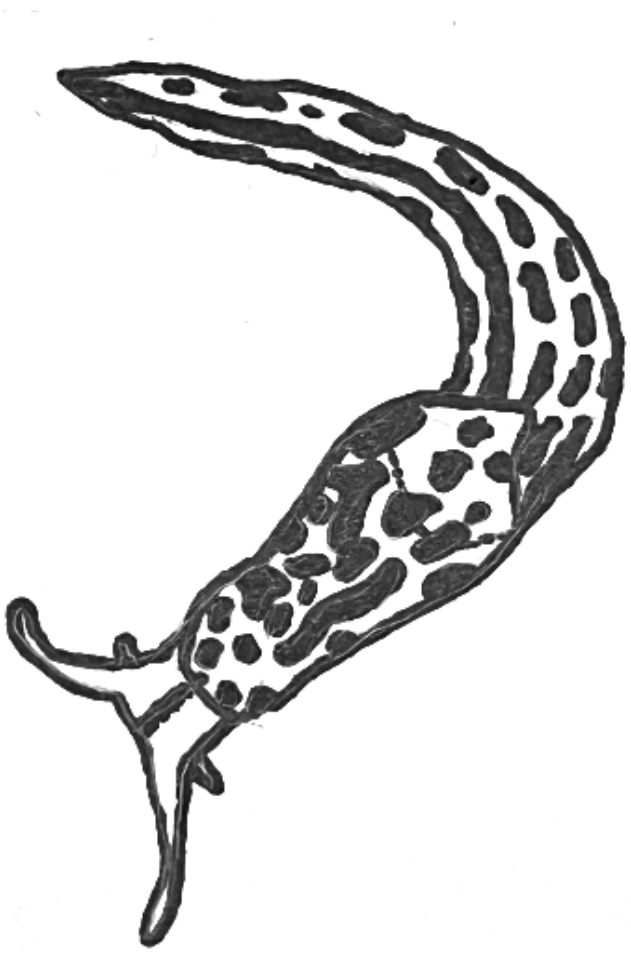
On a cultural level, if we make as

a society a commitment to a slower, more complete transportation network whose open windows let in the fresh air, where you can stand half-in half-out of the train car staring at the Grand Coulee, we divorce ourselves in a very real way from fast-paced capitalist life, devoid of beauty. And we do our part to reconnect to ancient wisdom.

Finally, a regional conventional train network is far more impactful on land use in its region than HSR. One of the key CURC visions is the Puget Sound region in harmony with respect to various land uses. Agricultural, residential (various densities), industrial, wetland, lowland forest, meadow, subalpine, alpine, high desert, riparian, etc. Regional rail helps accomplish harmonious land use by being a low-impact, widespread, flexible mode of transportation that encourages a certain density. Imagine: interspersed high-density urban nodes surrounded by working lands with necessary industrial areas scattered in low-impact sites throughout the region. And of course, elevated everywhere possible and wildlife crossings where not, with ecologically sensitive areas like the Nisqually Delta protected. How to fit such a system to current settlement and use patterns is difficult (there's a really good article and map by Stephen Festler on The Urbanist tackling this in the more urban area of the region).

We must improve our culture and economy to be much, much more tied in to ecology and human ecology. A key step in that is infrastructure and I think there's a lot to recommend a conventional regional train network. I would also love to discuss walking and biking networks on smaller scales which are of course the cleanest and widest spectrum forms of transportations, but I'll leave that for another article.

A. M.



DREAM OF LABOR

let us come with empty hands and empty hearts
to dig the wells and mend the fences, and build together
what future we have left. I want my labor to be what it can be:
the never-ending act of love that manifests
in throwing a plate. a full belly and a quiet mind
at the end of the day. a fire to crystallize us
into something stronger, something stranger.

I know now what I couldn't say then: that I would
make every dish on your table from scratch for you.
go out into the forest with a shovel
to find and dig the clay from under the tree roots,
sieve and sieve until it throws easy on the wheel.
plant a garden by the kilns,
raise the gas pressure while I grow you tomatoes.
card the wool from your sheep and spin it
to weave into a cloth, just the right size
for the weirdly-shaped table you made. bring you
the vegetables from the garden and the dishes,
set out the places while you cook.

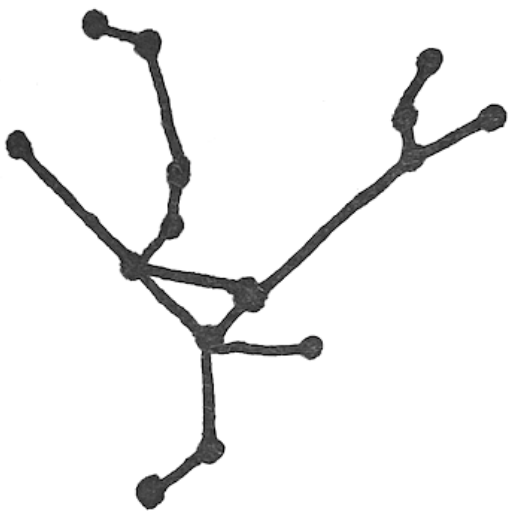
maybe I could be a hero too, the one
my father tried to show me in the mirror, the one
that runs into the street or holds you back from a cliff –
but that is so far away from the every day of our lives,
and I want my fleeting fantasies stitched into your sweaters,
I want my dreams to feed you, hold you,
and keep you warm through all your winters.

you know like I do we have to dream it first.
love each other first. learn to ferment,
and only get better with age. and every day
heal the things we couldn't fix when we were younger.
and every day drive my hands into clay and believe it will save me.

E.L. Stelter

CASCADE

I found it deep
In the cathedral-hush woods
Where great pillars hold
The capricious vault



Past where the few houses
Huddle close to highway 2
At the emerald feet
Of waves in frozen motion

Further
Where air has crept silent
Past one fir, two
Over a thousand years
But water skips light
On her feet

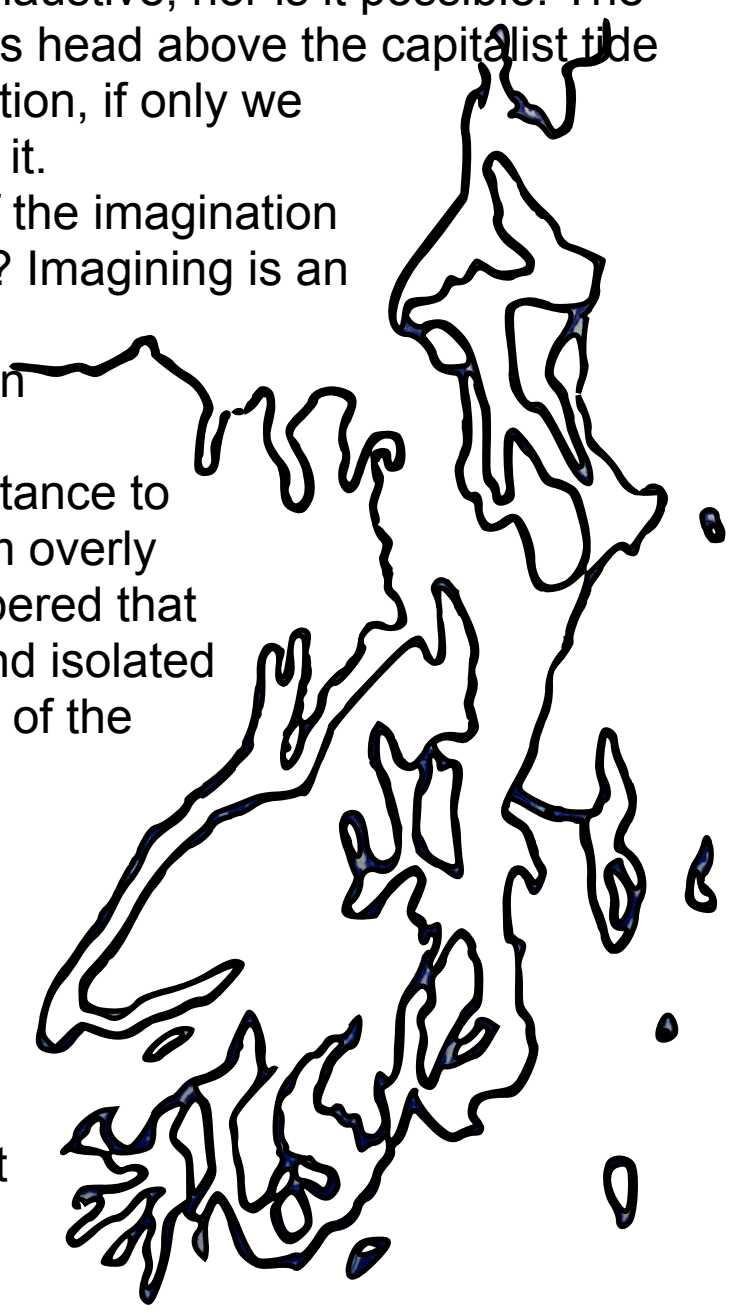
Moss coats the floor fractally
I am sinking it is my resting place
It absorbs the only sound
The distant roar of
Andromeda and the Milky way
Colliding

A. M.

iMAGiNATiON

The word evokes images of play and absurdity that harken one back to the innocence of childhood. But what could the act of imagining engender if we seized it from the distant memories of childhood and used it as a liberatory force? Capitalism has served as a bulwark against the imagination, siloing it to only having legitimacy if it serves production and innovation. However, capitalism's assault on the imaginative capacities of all beings is not exhaustive, nor is it possible. The power of the imagination holds its head above the capitalist tide and offers the potential for liberation, if only we can be brave enough to imagine it.

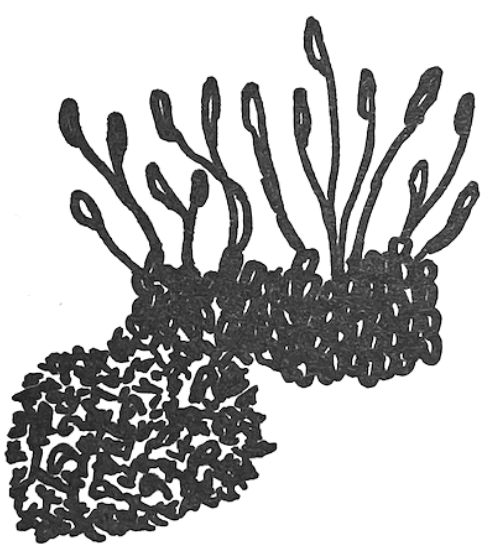
So how does the concept of the imagination serve us in our present moment? Imagining is an action, an ongoing process that requires mobilization. Imagination is here and now, in everyday revolutionary practices and resistance to hierarchies. While this may seem overly romanticized, it must be remembered that imagining is not simply a pure and isolated act. It will be required every step of the revolutionary way as we organize together and navigate tensions and contradictions in our own organizations. It will be required as capitalism deteriorates, and we find new ways to shield one another from violence and feed one another. It will once again be necessary once capitalism is nothing more than an echo, and we have to learn how to live together in an unprecedented context. We must begin imagining now, rooted in our time and place.



Show us, what does a liberated landscape look like to you? Feel free to draw on this map of the sound and send us pictures of your conception of a liberated cascadia at: *cascadiaurc@gmail.com.*

LEO SEASON

The White River is glacial melt
A slow moving mass turned milky
Quickening to the pace of waterfalls
Making rapidity of obstacles
Water always finds a way
And here we are making ecstatic boulders of ourselves
Our backs hot with a sun we know like craving
Our legs numb with the cold clay of it all
We could start the re-creation
Right here beneath the pines
I hand you the kinetic sand
One handful firming like this pod of a family
One loosening like our necks, like all these unneeded rules
We rub our bodies with mud
Removing dead skin layers, exfoliating away the no longer useful
At last we are warm
Sleeping beneath stars that know us
As well as the dirt beneath our backs
When we wake we will hear the river
Exhale deeply, and smile

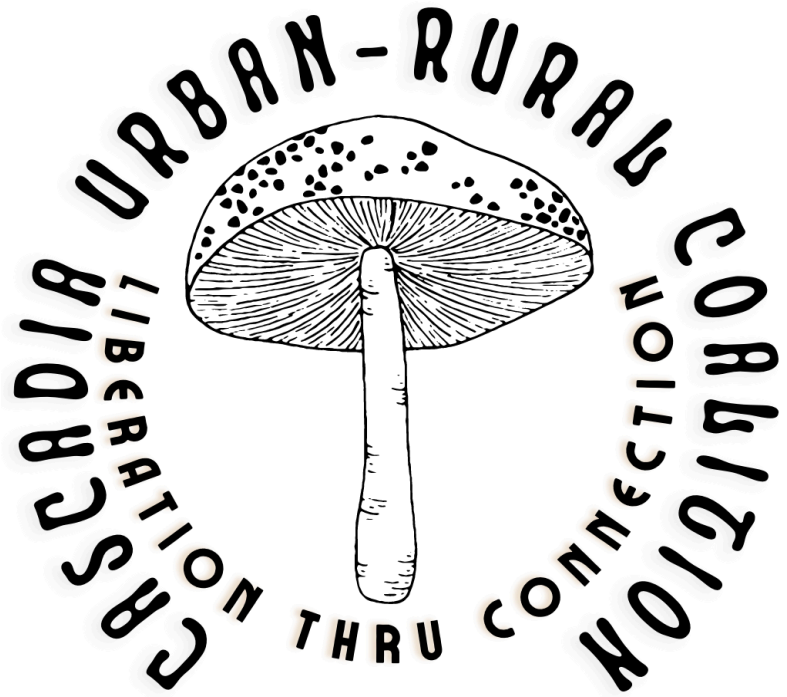


Sebastian Cole

OUR SUMMER'S END

You left behind the tarts I made for you from fresh northwest blackberries; the kind that consume every thicket and highway roadside with thorns and ripe deliciousness. And I did not run after you to your car as the summer sun set, tarts in hand, because you did not forget these treats. You felt the thick membranes of the berries straining to hold the luscious juice within, glazed with sun-kissed syrup and seated on a throne of fluffy crust. And you would have taken them to your lips, as you took mine this morning, without hunger; simply doing what one does with tarts or lovers after sleep has passed. You would have tasted the forest's bounty and the hour I spent rolling dough and drizzling berries, and you would have set it down with too much of me in the tart for it to sit well with you. So now, as you drive away to wherever Olympia roads take the free, I am left with the beauty of my own creation, only good for pictures on social media, too full of you to taste myself.

Alicia Goranson



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Insta is where we share info about upcoming work parties, skill shares, and other things we're up to.

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